

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 AID-05 CU-02 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
OMB-01 TRSE-00 /078 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6887
INFO AMEMBASSY VICTORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0805

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PGOV ELAB SCUL TATT MP UR
SUBJECT: MAURITIUS WEEKLY REVIEW - JULY 29

REF: PORT LOUIS 0774

SUMMARY: PORT LOUIS 0804 (NOTAL) PROVIDES A SUMMARY OF
THIS CABLE END SUMMARY.

1. WITH THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ADJOURNED, THE POLITICAL
BATTLE BETWEEN THE GOVERNING ALLIANCE AND THE MAURITIAN
MILITANT MOVEMENT (MMM) PARTY HAS MOVED TO THE MUNICIPALITIES.
AFTER A PERIOD OF COOPERATION IN THE WEEKS FOLLOWING THE
APRIL MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, THE TWO GROUPS HAVE FALLEN INTO
HOSTILITIES. TWO WEEKS AGO THE LABOR-MAURITIAN SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PMSD) MINORITY GROUP ON THE BEAU BASSIN
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL BOYCOTTED A MEETING BECAUSE OF WHAT IT
CONSIDERED THE DICTATORIAL BEHAVIOR OF THE MMM MAJORITY,
AND LAST WEEK THE MMM MINORITY ON THE VACOAS COUNCIL STAGED
A WALK-OUT AFTER THE LABOR PARTY MAYOR DECLINED TO ASK FOR
A VOTE ON A MMM MOTION TO MAKE WORKERS OCCUPYING MUNICIPAL
HOUSING THE OWNERS OF THE DWELLINGS THEY NOW RENT. THE
MUNICIPAL COUNCILS HAVE CLEARLY BECOME HIGHLY POLITICIZED,
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TO NO ONE'S SURPRISE.

2. THE MMM CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAS IMPROVED CERTAIN SANCTIONS
AGAINST HERVE MASSON FOR HIS REMARKS ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION
TO "LE MONDE DEIPLOMATIQUE" (REFTEL) AND OTHER REMARKS MADE
TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE. A MOTION OF CENSURE WAS ADOPTED
AGAINST HIM. HIS RESPONSIBILITY FOR DIRECTING MMM IDEOLOGICAL

SESSIONS WAS LIFTED, AS WELL AS THE EDITORSHIP OF A PROPOSED MONTHLY BULLETIN TO BE PUBLISHED BY THE PARTY. DEFENDING HIMSELF, MASSON SAID THAT PRESIDENT JUGNAUTH AND SECRETARY GENERAL BERENGER HAD ALSO "COMMITTED GAFFES."

3. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH L'EXPRESS, MAURITIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION (UDM) LEADER GUY OLLIVRY SAID HIS PARTY REPRESENTS A "THIRD FORCE" THAT WILL COME INTO ITS OWN AND ATTRACT BROAD SUPPORT FROM THOSE DISSATISFIED WITH THE "TWO EXTREMES" OF LABOR AND THE MMM ONCE THE COUNTRY ENETERS THE INEVITABLE PERIOD OF ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CRISIS LOOMING AHEAD. THE UDM IS DETERMINED TO PRESERVE THE COUNTRY'S DEMOCRATIC PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM AND WANTS TO HAVE BY-ELECTIONS RESTORED. IT ALSO WANTS A PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM SO THAT ALL POINTS OF VIEW ARE REPRESENTED IN THE ASSEMBLY (THE UDM WON NO SEATS IN DECEMBER). OLLIVRY CLAIMED THE GOVERNMENT HAS STOLEN THE UDM SLOGAN OF "WORKER PARTICIPATION" BUT INTENDS TO GIVE WORKERS ONLY A TOKEN SHARE OF CAPITAL AND NOTHING REALLY MEANINGFUL IN TERMS OF OWNERSHIP OF THE FIRMS THEY WORK FOR. OLLIVRY WAS DECIDEDLY CRITICAL OF THE MMM'S PERFORMANCE IN THE ASSEMBLY; HE SAID THE UDM PROVIDED A MORE SERIOUS OPPOSITION WITH THE 5 MEMBERS IT HAD IN THE LAST ASSEMBLY THAN THE MMM HAS FURNISHED WITH ITS 33 MEMBERS IN TODAY'S.

4. IN ANOTHER PRESS INTERVIEW THE MAURITIAN MILITANT
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MOVEMENT-SOCIALIST-PROGRESSIVE (MMM-SP) LEADER, DEV VIRAHSAWMY, MADE CLEAR THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIS GROUP AND THE MMM, OF WHICH IT WAS AN OFF-SHOOT. ACCORDING TO THE PARTY LEADER, THE MMM-SP HOPES TO INSTALL A COMMUNIST SYSTEM EVENTUALLY, PASSING THROUGH SOCIALISM, AND IT BELIEVES IN THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT. HE SAID THE MMM WANTS TO STOP AT SOCIALISM AND BELIEVES IN COOPERATION WITH THE MIDDLE CLASS AND PETIT BOURGEOISIE.

5. ON JULY 25 PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM AND SOVIET AMBASSADOR SAFRONOV SIGNED AN ANNUAL RENEWAL OF THE USSR-MAURITIAN CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC AGREEMENT WHICH DATES BACK TO 1969. THE ACCORD SPECIFIES SCHOLARSHIPS BEING OFFERED FOR THE COMING YEAR BY THE USSR PLUS VARIOUS EXCHANGES OF CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL PERSONNEL. ACCORDING TO "THE STAF" NEWSPAPER, DESPITE THE SMILES THERE WAS A "COOLNESS IN THE AIR" AT THE SIGNING CEREMONY. SAFRONOV MADE A SLIGHT GAFFE IN REFERRING TO RAMGOOLAM AS "THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE," ONE OF HIS FORMER POSTS. SAFRONOV DEPARTED THE NEXT DAY ON TWO MONTHS' LEAVE IN THE USSR.

6. NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE GOVERNMENT, EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION

AND NATIONAL TRADE UNION FRONT OVER THE LATTER'S DEMAND FOR
A 22 PER CENT GENERAL WAGE INCREASE NEARED A CLIMAX THIS
WEEK BUT NO FINAL DECISION WAS REACHED BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT
WITHHELD ITS POSITION. THE TRADE UNIONS REDUCED THEIR DEMAND
TO A SLIDING SCALE INCREASE RANGING FROM 7.4 PER CENT FOR
HIGHER INCOME LEVELS TO A 17.8 PER CENT INCREASE FOR THE
LOWEST WAGE EARNERS, WHILE THE EMPLOYERS OFFERED ONLY A
5.3 PER CENT INCREASE FOR THOSE EARNING LESS THAN 370 RUPEES
A MONTH. EACH SIDE IS STILL CALLING THE OTHER'S OFFER
"UNACCEPTABLE".
KEELEY

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